

**BENJAMIN BROOKS**  
*Legislative District 10*  
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee  
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal  
Service Program Workgroup



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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB1026**  
**County Boards of Education – Budgets- Notice**  
**(Transparency in Education Spending Act)**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
March 6, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice-chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB1026– Transparency Spending in Education Act. The purpose of this bill is to enhance the transparency and accountability of county boards of education in Maryland regarding their budgeting processes.

The implementation of The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, coupled with an influx of federal relief and rescue funding, has compounded the concern of “black box” spending in public education. The Blueprint calls for additional reporting, a series of inputs to the Blueprint’s oversight committee, and a pending new budget-tracking software for school systems. These present opportunities to instill clarity and accountability in school spending. Counties, as fiduciary partners in public education, should have access to the pending new data.

SB1026 requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to establish a uniform procedure for county boards to report budget information promptly to their respective county governing bodies. Further, it requires county boards to post specific budget information on their websites, ensures budget transfers have flexibility to seize opportunities for our students, and requires audit reports are sent to these entities.

This bill will not mandate new or more reporting than already required by law, and it does not give counties authority or decision-making control over school budgets. Instead, SB1026:

1. Gives counties access to more complete and timely education spending information using existing reporting requirements and systems.
2. Provides counties with the tools to anticipate education costs and budget responsibly.
3. Makes uniform financial reporting standards and expectations for all school systems and county governments.
4. Empowers Maryland taxpayers and families to know how their public dollars are spent in schools and on their children’s education.

How public dollars are being spent should be accessible to the public. This bill does not create new vigorous reporting requirements but instead makes what is already being done more available.

For these reasons, I am requesting a favorable report on SB1026.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks